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Issue 113 • Spring 2011 • www.blm.gov/ak
News about BLM's National System of Public Lands in Alaska

BLM Alaska

Breaking the Ice

North Slope Science Initiative

Scott Guyer

A mile out from Barrow on the Chukchi Sea.

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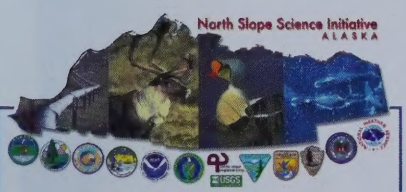


Find out more about the NSSI and the important science work being done in the Arctic at: http://www.northslope.org

When the North Slope Science Initiative (NSSI) hosted a March 29-31 workshop at the beautiful Iñupiat Heritage Center in Barrow, the organizers planned meetings to talk about bringing science, natural resources, and subsistence together. What they didn't plan on was experiencing a powerful glimpse of life in America's Arctic.

While the workshop involved scientific poster presentations, panels, roundtable discussions, and webcasting portions to a broader audience – similar components of meetings held in other venues – the Barrow experience broke the ice. It was a merging, a celebration of lifeways and survival, a poignant reminder to the government and organizational representatives from the people who live there about the importance of what NSSI is doing and what it means. NSSİ also offered excursions to environmental observatories, and sea ice or snow tours.

John Payne

Round table discussion of North Slope residents, scientists, and government representatives.

Satrina Lord, a supervisor for BLM-Alaska's Information Management Section in Anchorage, attended the workshop as part of her experience in BLM's Leadership Academy. She was prepared for a business meeting, but ended up joining Iñupiat dancers and Barrow residents on-stage and learning

—continued on page 2

Breaking the Ice —continued from page 1

the traditional dance. She experienced a potlatch-style dinner hosted at the high school gym. She wore bunny boots and bundled up to experience 'breaking the trail' more than a mile out across the snow-covered Chukchi Sea by snowmachines. The whale hunters will need the trail in late May to move boats and gear out to the open sea for the whale hunts. She listened to Iñupiat whalers, Mayor Edward Itta, and local citizens of Barrow describe their observations of climate change, their dependence on natural resources, and how critical it is to embrace and support modern science while sharing their traditional ecological knowledge.

John Payne

Satrina Lord learns a traditional Iñupiat dance from one of the performers.

Lord also came to understand why the NSSI and science of the North Slope has ramifications far beyond Alaska. "The extremes of the Arctic show climate changes 15 years before they appear outside of the polar regions," Satrina explains. "What the NSSI is working to achieve by bringing together scientific data across the North Slope is crucial for the future for not just Alaska, but globally. We have a 15-year window ahead of changes people observe everywhere else."

Mayor Itta's welcoming speech at the workshop is one everyone wanted to bring home with them, to have copies made, and to quote and refer to again and again. Itta spoke from the heart about the interconnectedness of all things. He spoke of his father growing up in a camp on the eastern side of Teshekpuk Lake in the midst of today's National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska. He told how the family followed the migrations of marine mammals and land-based animals of all kinds.

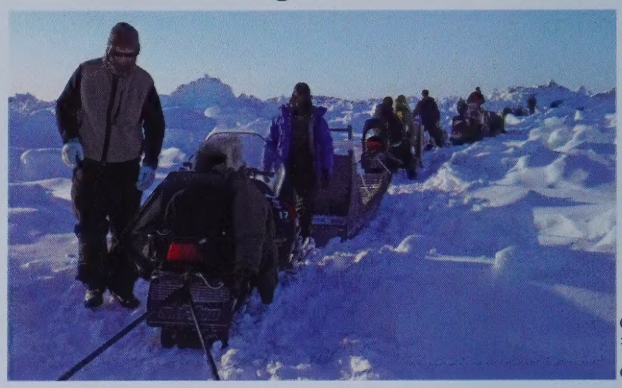
Itta said that he and all of the Iñupiat who came before him were scientists and protectors of the Arctic. "Our knowledge comes from repeated observations over a long time. Our science is one where we lived and died by our ability to observe and interpret what we saw, understanding the subtleties of ice and ocean and tundra," Itta said. "We have created a database of knowledge passed down through our generations, both of nature's behavior and consistency and the changes over time."

John Payne

Barrow Mayor Edward S. Itta

"The pace of these changes seems to be increasing," Itta said. "and we are very concerned about how it will affect the whale migration and the ability of other marine mammals and shore-based animals to survive. Since we are inextricably tied to these subsistence species, their fate is our fate."

Breaking the Ice



Scott Guyer

Before they go to sea
To practice the act of a thousand years
They must prepare a trail
To hunt the great whale
We all came to break ice

In words or deed we each took part
In forging bonds and building new paths
Like children listening to stories of old ways
At the feet of elders in the early days
We all came to break ice

And with our hearts and hands
We chipped away at a frozen sea
Of wounds and mistakes made in the past
Hopeful that newly-forged memories will last
We all came to break ice

So let us dance the Native way
To tell the story of the hunt
And how we each must live and be
To protect the land and the sea
We all came to break ice

Composed by Satrina Lord

John Payne

First day of the Workshop.

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Winter Trails Day 2011
Fun for All Ages

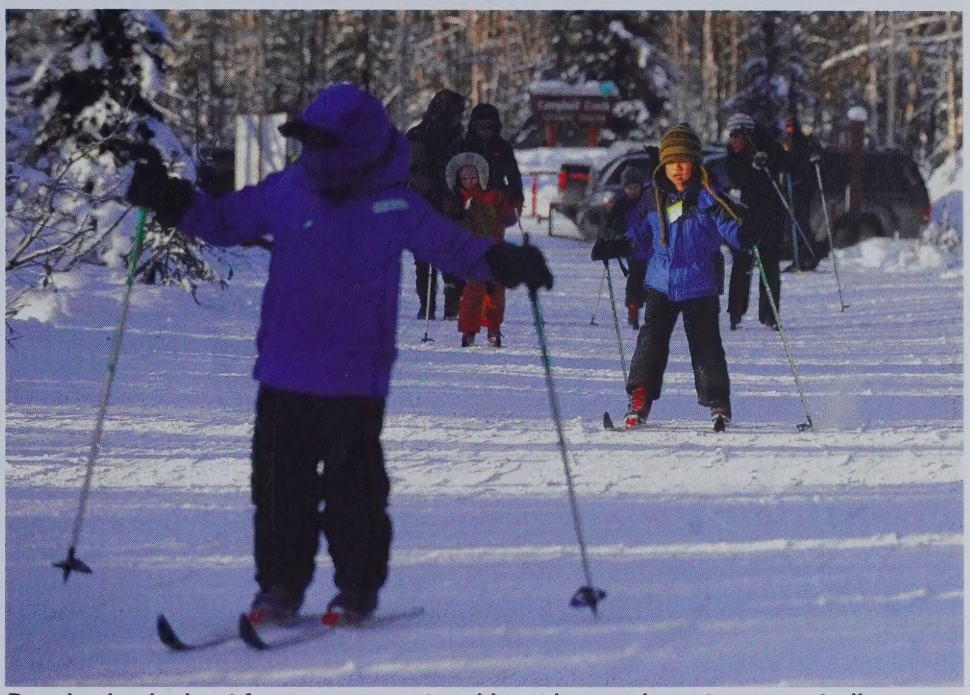
Editor's note: Mitchel Veenstra, a University of Alaska Anchorage journalism student, wrote this article.

This year's eighth annual Winter Trails Day was an amazing day for families. While the day started slow and temperatures hovered at 14 degrees below zero, the sun quickly warmed things up. Without a cloud in the sky, it was hard to resist the allure of heading to the BLM Campbell Creek Science Center to check out all of the fun Winter Trails Day activities.

More than 800 people "moved outside," a theme borrowed from the Department of the Interior's initiative to get youth and families outdoors and exercising through the winter months.

This year also offered geocaching. To geocache, participants received a GPS unit and list of coordinates, and then used their GPS unit to find the spot. Michelle Reber brought her children to Winter Trails Day specifically to learn about geocaching. She said, "We got to learn how to find different waypoints, [and] it was exciting!"

Maria Shawback attended with her three children. "It's great to be outside with all these activities!" she exclaimed.



Mitchel Veenstra

People checked-out free cross-country skis and snowshoes to use on trails around the Science Center. REI and the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Ski Outreach Program provided the equipment.

Not all Winter Trails Day activities took place outside of the Science Center. Visitors could wander around indoors and view informational exhibits that highlighted different recreational clubs throughout Southcentral Alaska and offered winter safety and outdoor tips.

Campbell Creek Science Center Manager Jeff Brune gave credit to the 40 community organizations, including REI, who helped with the event. "It was great to see families and friends playing outdoors and having fun in the snow. What a great community we have here in Anchorage!"

Be sure to mark your calendars with a reminder to attend the next Winter Trails Day in February 2012.

— Mitchel Veenstra, special to BLM-Alaska Frontiers

For more information on events at the Campbell Creek Science Center, visit http://www.blm.gov/ak/sciencecenter/ or sign up on Twitter at http://twitter.com/BLMCCSC for event tweets.

Mitchel Veenstra

Mitchel Veenstra

(Above) **Roasting marshmallows over an open fire kept bodies warm and spirits high!**

(Left) **Visitors could experience a fat-tire bike demonstration. Other activities included winter mountain biking, crawling through snow shelters, searching for avalanche beacons, and completing a snowshoe obstacle course.**

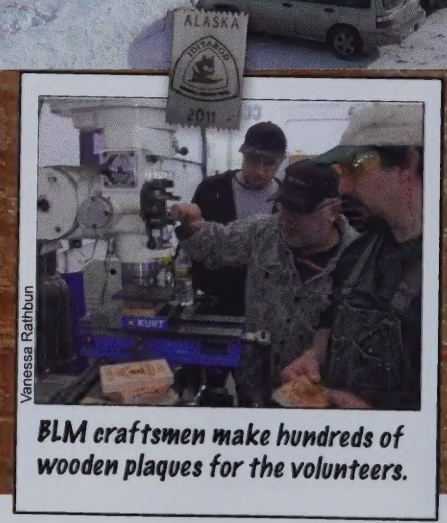
BLM Hosts Iditarod Cerem

A Colossal BLM Annual Event at C

Vanessa Rathbun

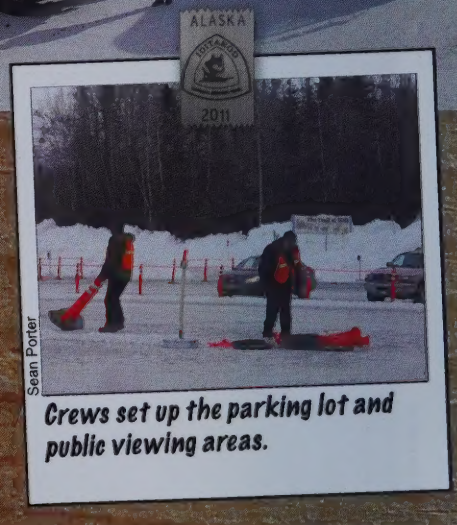
Gerry Minick

Going over the logistics with employees and volunteers.



Vanessa Rathbun

BLM craftsmen make hundreds of wooden plaques for the volunteers.

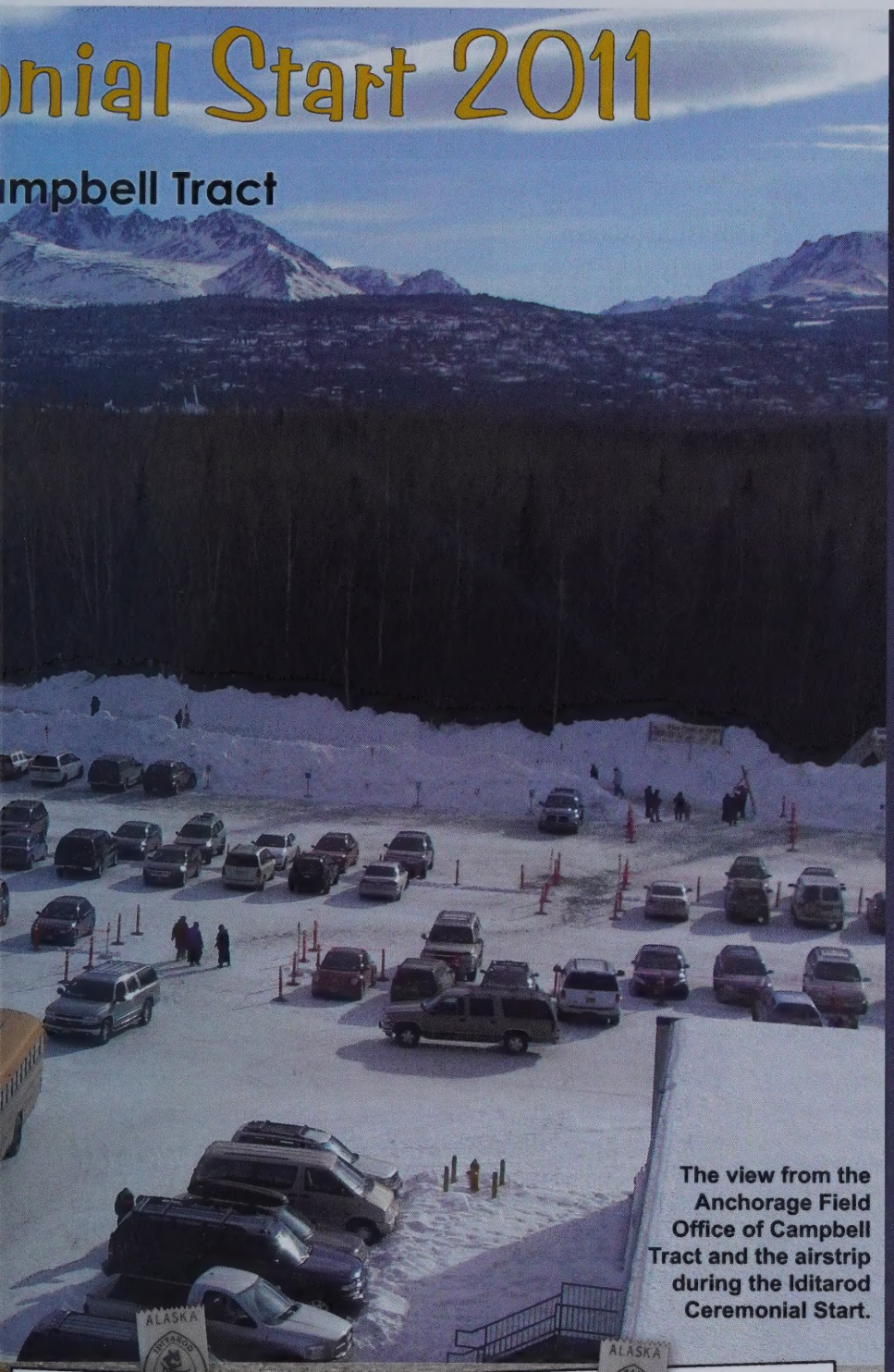


Sean Porter

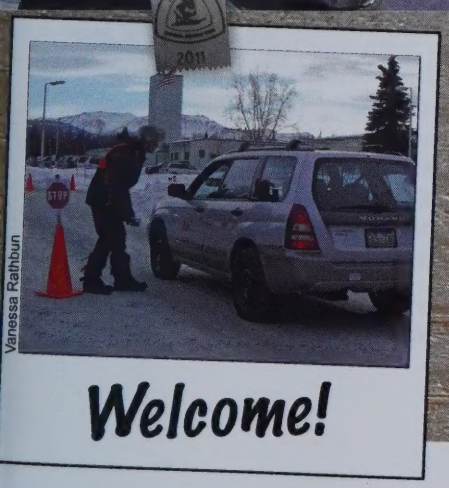
Crews set up the parking lot and public viewing areas.

onial Start 2011

ampbell Tract



The view from the Anchorage Field Office of Campbell Tract and the airstrip during the Iditarod Ceremonial Start.



Vanessa Rathbun

Vanessa Rathbun

More than 3,000 people attended the ceremonial start of 2011 Iditarod Race, held this year at BLM's Campbell Tract in Anchorage. Hundreds of people gathered at the Campbell Creek Science Center, Campbell Airstrip Trailhead, BLM Road entrance. Nearly 700 rode on the three shuttle buses.

Preparations began months in advance and involved planners, facilities staff, Job Corps students, winter recreation specialists, volunteer trail groomers, and many others. Some tasks involved operating forklifts, snow shoveling, leasing equipment, stocking supplies, creating signs, setting up bus stops, coordinating, publicity, moving and parking traffic, and safety and security.

The snow trails were meticulously groomed for easy access by wheelchairs, canes, crutches, and baby strollers. This made Campbell Tract one of the best fully accessible locations to view the mushers and dogs up close and personal.

Volunteers from 'Friends of the Campbell Creek Science Center' greeted and directed visitors to prime viewing locations on the trails. They also offered fun games, warmth, and refreshments indoors.

– Jorjena Daly,
Outdoor Recreation Planner
jdaly@blm.gov

Here's a glimpse into some of the pre-event tasks/labor:

Task/Labor	Hours
Snow plowing (leasing two front loaders) for Iditarod race and parking areas	120
Creation of 750 wooden plaques	52
Signs and fence posts	12
Race/musher/staff/public parking areas set-up	28
Public road, parking and trail sanding	2
Packing and grooming Campbell Tract's Iditarod Trail section and public trail	10

Sean Porter

BLM-Alaska Welcomes New Key Staff

Ronald Dunton
Authorized Officer

Dunton

Ron became the Authorized Officer for the BLM-Alaska Office of Pipeline Monitoring last February. Ron describes his new work as a "challenge in an interagency setup to work with partners in multiple jurisdictions. We learn to see the other agencies viewpoints."

Ron worked previously for the BLM as BLM-Alaska Gas Pipelines Project Manager, National Acting Director for the Office of Wildland Fire, New Mexico Deputy State Director for Lands and Resources, National Fire Program Manager at the Interagency Fire Center, and Area Manager/Assistant Manager, and Fire Supervisor/Manager in Alaska and New Mexico.

Artealia Gilliard
Chief of Communications

Gilliard

Artealia says "It's an exciting time to join BLM-Alaska. The current fiscal climate challenges us to spend wisely and communicate concisely, but it also gives us the opportunity to innovate and broaden our use of new technology. I look forward to both the challenge and the opportunity!" Artealia has worked for the Internal Revenue Service, Centers for Disease Control, DeKalb County Solicitor-General, U.S. Air Force, U.S. Borax, and Non Commissioned Officers Association. She has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Communication and Public Relations from the University of Texas at San Antonio and is a candidate for a Master of Science degree in Communications Management at Syracuse University.

Steven Hartmann
Fairbanks District Manager

Hartmann

Steve says he is "excited about working with BLM employees and constituents in Alaska. I'm looking forward to the changes, opportunities, and challenges Alaska offers." Steve previously served the BLM as a Field Manager for the Idaho Salmon Field Office. He was also a BLM-Montana Assistant Field Manager in Butte and held range conservationist positions in Utah and Montana. Steve has a bachelor's degree in forestry from the University of Montana and a master's degree in conflict resolution from Antioch McGregor University. Steve will begin in Fairbanks at the end of May.

Tracking *Oreamnos americanus*

In 2010, the BLM and Alaska Department of Fish and Game began a three-year cooperative project to monitor mountain goat movements in the Haines/Skagway area using GPS radio collars. Biologists darted, captured, and released with radio collars a total of 23 adult mountain goats (13 billies and 10 nannies) between Takhin Ridge and the Nourse River valley.

Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Alaska Fish and Game wildlife biologist Ryan Scott collars a 385-pound billy near Haines on Aug. 4, 2010.

The radio collars store location data, which is collected bi-monthly by remote download over a three-year period. The telemetry data will provide information on seasonal movement patterns, habitat selection, reproductive success and survival, population abundance, and age and sex composition of mountain goats in the area.

The data will also provide an accurate method to validate a habitat model developed in 2009 using goat monitoring data collected by the BLM from 1995 through 2005. The telemetry data and the habitat model will help the BLM refine permit stipulations for helicopter-based recreation on BLM-administered lands in the area.

Since August, GPS data shows four of the 23 collared goats have died. The State and BLM will try to recover those collars to help determine cause of the mortalities and to re-use in the study.

— Teresa McPherson
tmcpherson@blm.gov

FRONTIERS Flashes

News from around Alaska

BLM-Alaska Resource Advisory Council to meet in Anchorage

The advisory council is met in Anchorage April 26-27. Among the topics discussed was the Red Devil Mine Work Plan and Fish Tissue Sampling Program.

If you are interested in applying or nominating someone for this Advisory Council in the future, please contact coordinator Thom Jennings, tjennings@blm.gov, so when the application period is open, you'll be notified. It's a great way to be involved and provide suggestions on issues affecting BLM-managed public lands in Alaska.

Tangle Lakes Campground to be renovated this summer

Marnie Graham

This summer, the BLM is renovating the popular BLM Tangle Lakes Campground at milepost 21.5 on the Denali Highway. The campground will remain open throughout construction, but some parts of the campground will close while undergoing the renovations. Campsites are first-come, first-served.

"Right now, campers can park anywhere because campsites are undesignated," Marcia Butorac, BLM Recreation and Facilities Coordinator, explains. "The renovations will designate campsites improve roadbeds, define foot trails, and provide a new day-use area within the campground. They will also help to restore damaged areas and protect cultural resources."

Once construction is complete, the renovated Tangle Lakes Campground will become a fee site. Campground fees will be compatible with other campground facilities within the Glennallen Field Office management area. BLM will use 100 percent of the collected fees for enhancements including maintenance and repairs, accessibility, interpretation, and other improvement.

For renovation updates, please visit http://www.blm.gov/ak or contact the BLM Glennallen Field Office at 907-822-3217.

Endurance Race returns to the White Mountains National Recreation Area

Craig McCaa

On Mar. 27-29, skiers, cyclists, and walkers participated in the second annual 2011 White Mountains 100 Race in the White Mountains National Recreation Area. The Eastern Interior Field Office worked closely with race organizers and other users of the National Recreation Area to permit the human-powered endurance race. Sixty-five racers, including 33 skiers, 29 cyclists, and 3 walkers started the challenging 100-mile loop with nearly 8,000 feet of elevation gain. All but seven racers completed the course. The success of last year's inaugural event filled this year's race roster within a few hours.

America's Great Outdoors Initiative

The President's "America's Great Outdoors: A Promise to Future Generations" initiative encourages you to help us identify way to share and protect our natural heritage. BLM-Alaska is doing this through youth and families, partners, volunteers, and its programs, including Take it Outside, Move Outside, Iditarod National Historic Trail Centennial, Earth Day, and others. Help celebrate America's Great Outdoors!

Mitchel Veenstra

Joette Storm, President of Friends of the Campbell Creek Science Center, at the Science Center.

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BLM-ALASKA FRONTIERS...
From the Managing Editor

I worked at BLM-Alaska's booth recently at the Great Alaska Sportsman Show in Anchorage. It was a truly wonderful opportunity to meet people who camp, hike, fish, explore, photograph, float the Wild and Scenic rivers, watch wildlife, go gold panning, and otherwise enjoy BLM-managed public lands. Our exhibit featured BLM-Alaska's fisheries program and recreational sportsfishing.

Ronald Laubenstein

BLM-Alaska's Sportsman Show booth. Come see us next year for our Homesteading exhibit!

For this issue we received more photos or stories than fits in our issue. We plan to make some photos available on our BLM-Alaska website. I strongly encourage you to check our website for recreation news, activities and events, the land use planning process, our scientific reports, to download brochures, and so much more.

Our subscriptions are growing, and I credit both the outstanding people who help make BLM-Alaska Frontiers possible and you, our readers. Thank you.

— Karen J. Laubenstein
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